

REMEMBERING THE HONORABLE
JAMES R. WILLIAMS

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. RYAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of James R. Williams, the first African American to serve as a Summit County, Ohio Common Pleas judge and a longtime Akron civic and civil rights leader, who passed away on Friday, November 9, 2020, at the age of 88.

Judge Williams was an Akron Municipal Court judge, a member of Akron City Council, and in 1978 was appointed by President Jimmy Carter as U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Ohio. He was appointed to Akron Municipal Court in 1983, and then in 1989 became Summit County's first Black Common Pleas Court judge, subsequently twice winning reelection to the bench.

He was a civil rights leader who was an officer with the Akron and Ohio NAACP branches and other organizations. He was a University of Akron alumnus and a former president of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity that, while he was a member, pioneered housing for low- to moderate-income residents and seniors.

Judge Williams was the principal founder and first chairman of Alpha Phi Alpha Homes Inc., a nonprofit housing, development and management corporation formed in 1966 in Akron by the Eta Tau Lambda chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha.

James, a native of Columbus, Mississippi, moved to Ohio following active service with the U.S. Army. He also taught in Akron Public Schools and was a senior staff member for Akron's Department of Planning and Urban Development. He retired as common pleas judge in January 2005, after 15 years on the bench.

Judge Williams was preceded in death by his first wife, Catherine. He is survived by his wife, Jewell Cardwell-Williams; two children, Michael, a former Akron City Council member, and Jacqueline Walton; and four grandchildren.

The Honorable James R. Williams was truly a revered figure in Summit County and Northeast Ohio. Anyone who knew Judge Williams saw him as a man of deep integrity and a man that carried a strong commitment to community. I cannot thank James enough for his service to our country and his service to Akron and Summit County. My deepest condolences go out to the Williams family and to all whose lives were touched by James.

IN HONOR OF JOHN W.
BORNHOLDT

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor John W. Bornholdt of Huntingdon County for his service in the United States Air Force. John is an outstanding Pennsylvanian, and I am grateful for his service to our nation, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and our community.

In Pennsylvania and across the country, our veterans have served and sacrificed for Americans' freedom and our values. They answered the call to serve and fight for us—at a great cost. Truly, our veterans are the best of America.

In Congress, it is my privilege—and my responsibility—to stand up for those who have served our country in uniform, as well as to recognize these brave Americans. As a nation, we are indebted to them. On behalf of the 13th Congressional District, I thank John for his service to our nation and our community.

HONORING DR. EARNEST LEE
RANKIN, SR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Earnest Lee Rankin, Sr. who was born in Simpson County, Mississippi on March 12, 1947, to Eliza Marie Rankin. He was the seventh of eight children.

Dr. Rankin graduated from Harper High School in 1967, in Mendenhall, MS, before attending Prentiss Institute and graduating in 1969. While at Prentiss Institute, he married Dorothy Mikell, affectionately known as "Doris," on March 2, 1969. Dr. Rankin graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Tougaloo College in May 1971.

After attaining the highest score on the Medical College Admission Test in the state of Mississippi, he was accepted into the third integrated class of Medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, MS, in 1971. Dr. Rankin completed a two-year residency in Family Practice at Texas Tech University in Amarillo, TX, and then decided to return home to begin practicing medicine, first in Madison, Leake & Yazoo Family Health Center in Canton, MS, in 1976, and later opening a private practice in Family Medicine in Jackson, MS, circa 1979.

An intelligent, compassionate man of humble beginnings, he believed that everyone should be treated like a human being and was entitled to receive adequate health care. Dr. Rankin provided health care services to countless family members, the poor, the underprivileged, and the "have-nots," finally retiring in 2019, after 43 years of practice.

At an early age, Dr. Rankin joined Mount Zion Hill Baptist Church in Mendenhall, MS. Later in life, under the influence of Bro. Eddie Gates, Sr., he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Dr. Rankin was a member of Mount Wade Baptist Church under the leadership of the late Rev. Cleve Snell. He was an active member of the church for 28 years, serving as Sunday school teacher, deacon, member of the finance board, and wherever else he was needed.

Dr. Rankin lived a full life as a volunteer in the Parchman Penitentiary Prison ministry, an avid and competitive bowler, and a great huntsman who rarely missed deer hunting season (or any other season for that matter). Dr. Earnest Rankin, Sr. held a special place in his heart for his family.

Dr. Rankin is survived by his wife, Mrs. Dorothy Rankin of Jackson, Mississippi; children, Dr. Yolanda A. Rankin, Earnest Rankin,

Jr., Demetira Rankin, Christa Pittman, and Patrick McKinney Rankin.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Earnest Lee Rankin, Sr.

HONORING THE LIFE OF LT. COL.
(RET.) DANNY CURTIS

HON. DAVID LOESACK

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. LOESACK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Lt. Col. Danny Curtis of Hills, Iowa, who passed away on October 24, 2020. Lt. Col. Curtis joined the Army in 1964, serving one tour in Korea and two tours in Vietnam. While in service, he led teams to build Blackhawk helicopters, taught military science at the University of Notre Dame, and received numerous commendations, including one Legion of Merit, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, and three Bronze Stars. Lt. Col. Curtis is survived by his son, Clayton (Laura) Curtis, and two grandchildren, Annmarie and Evelyn. He was preceded in death by his wife, Judy Slaughter Curtis, mother Ester Buline Curtis, father Lloyd Curtis, and sister Nina Jean Curtis.

Danny Curtis did not tend to shine a light on his own accomplishments, though numerous they were. Instead, he highlighted experiences that demonstrated the best of man in comradeship. He led by this principle later in life, being a steady advocate and friend to fellow veterans, and a fixture in his community. Known by his friends and family for his wit and his ability to weave a story, he will be greatly missed. So, on this, the week of Veterans day, let us remember his sacrifice, and the sacrifice of all the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

IN HONOR OF KENNETH A.
BOWSER

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Kenneth A. Bowser of Huntingdon County for his service in the United States Army National Guard. Kenneth is an outstanding Pennsylvanian, and I am grateful for his service to our nation, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and our community.

In Pennsylvania and across the country, our veterans have served and sacrificed for Americans' freedom and our values. They answered the call to serve and fight for us—at a great cost. Truly, our veterans are the best of America.

In Congress, it is my privilege—and my responsibility—to stand up for those who have served our country in uniform, as well as to recognize these brave Americans. As a nation, we are indebted to them. On behalf of the 13th Congressional District, I thank Kenneth for his service to our nation and our community.

TRIBUTE TO VETERANS OF THE
ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED
STATES

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to all the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States and risked their lives to defend our freedoms and way of life and took and lived the oath to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic” and bore true faith and allegiance to the same, an obligation they took freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion.

Veterans are truly heroes walking among us.

I want to thank all of our armed servicemen and women for their selfless dedication to our protection every day.

Veterans Day is a reminder to all of us who live in freedom that, as President Kennedy said, “The price of freedom is high, but Americans have always paid it.”

This Veterans Day is a welcome opportunity to remember that the fallen who gave the last full measure of devotion to their country on battlefields around the world—in places whose names may be unforgettable—or locations that have slipped into the pages of history.

We will never forget: Revolutionary War—Valley Forge, Yorktown; Civil War—The Battle of Antietam, The Battle of Gettysburg; World War I—The Battle of Argonne, Flanders Field, Verdun; World War II—Pearl Harbor, Battle of Bataan, The Battle of Midway, D-Day, Battle of the Bulge, Battle of Anzio, Battle of Corregidor; Korean War—Inchon, Heart Break Ridge, Pork Chop Hill; Vietnam—Tet Offensive, Battle of Hue; Desert Storm—September 11, 2001, Pentagon Attack (125 killed); Operation Enduring Freedom—Battle of Kandahar; Operation Iraqi Freedom—Second Battle of Fallujah.

The memory of the fallen are never forgotten.

Each Veterans Day, Americans come together to remember those who have served our country around the world in the name of freedom and democracy.

The debt that we owe to them is immeasurable.

Their sacrifices, and those of their families, are freedom’s foundation.

Without the brave efforts of all the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and Coast Guardsmen and women and their families, our country would not live so freely.

I offer my deepest gratitude to our nation’s troops and reservists, their families, and the 21.6 million veterans, including 29,126 here in the 18th Congressional District.

21.6 million brave men and women are veterans of our nation’s military service.

This includes more than 2 million women, 2.7 million African-American men and women, 1.5 million Hispanic men and women, 342,000 Asian-American Pacific Islanders, and 178,000 American Indians.

Nine in ten military families believe the public does not understand or appreciate their sacrifices.

We use Veterans Day to show our veterans and military families how important they are to

us and how grateful we are for them each and everyday.

November is National Caregivers Month to show our caregivers how grateful we are for them.

It is only fitting that we thank those caregivers who serve our military today.

5.5 million spouses, parents, children, and other loved ones care for our wounded warriors and 15 percent of caregivers spend 40+ hours a week providing care for our military families.

As a senior member of the House Committees on Judiciary and Homeland Security, I care deeply about our veterans.

In Congress, I have sponsored many legislative proposals and cosponsored more than 50 pieces of legislation that will positively benefit our veterans and their families.”

This year, I introduced H.R. 2898, the Buddy Check Week, which has been endorsed by the American Legion.

The American Legion send email urging all congressional offices to support veterans by cosponsoring H.R. 2898, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate a week as “Buddy Check Week” for the purpose of outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks for veterans, and for other purposes.

The American Legion was chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1919, and today it is the nation’s largest wartime veterans service organization.

As we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic on all fronts, we cannot forget about our duty to care for our veterans who have already sacrificed so much for this country.

Throughout this epidemic, the feeling of isolation among veterans has only been amplified, causing an increased risk of suicide within the community.

CBS News has reported a 20 percent increase in military suicides when compared to the same period in 2019.

A report conducted by the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute found that for every 5 percent increase in the unemployment rate, we could lose an additional 550 veterans to suicide annually and up to 20,000 more veterans may be susceptible to substance abuse as a result of the crisis.

Now more than ever, we need the Buddy Check Week Act.

This bill would provide vital support and training to organize outreach events and educate veterans on how to conduct peer wellness checks and recognize signs of problems in fellow veterans that indicate suicide risks.

This legislation is modeled after the American Legion’s “Buddy Check National Week of Calling,” held March 11 to 16, 2019, and will augment the organization’s efforts to conduct outreach to veterans across the nation.

The Buddy Check Week Act directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in consultation with veterans, non-profits that serve veterans, mental health experts, and members of the Armed Forces, to develop and implement collaborative education opportunities for veterans to learn how to conduct wellness checks.

The VA will provide online or in-person training to individuals, as well as provide opportunities for Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) to learn how to: train individuals to conduct peer wellness checks, transfer phone calls to the Veterans Crisis Line, and be resilient when handling a veteran in crisis.

The Buddy Check Week Act is a fitting way to honor our veterans and I look forward to working with my colleagues to see that it becomes law.

On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind.

As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind.

This day and every day let us honor their service with actions that fulfill our commitment to our troops, their families, and our veterans—and that are worthy of our grateful nation.

IN HONOR OF LESTER A.
BURDETTE

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Lester A. Burdette of Huntingdon County for his service in the United States Army. Lester is an outstanding Pennsylvanian, and I am grateful for his service to our nation, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and our community.

In Pennsylvania and across the country, our veterans have served and sacrificed for Americans’ freedom and our values. They answered the call to serve and fight for us—at a great cost. Truly, our veterans are the best of America.

In Congress, it is my privilege—and my responsibility—to stand up for those who have served our country in uniform, as well as to recognize these brave Americans. As a nation, we are indebted to them. On behalf of the 13th Congressional District, I thank Lester for his service to our nation and our community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF
CONSTANTINE “BUZZ” BELER

HON. GEORGE HOLDING

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Mr. HOLDING. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Constantine “Buzz” Beler, who passed away last month at the age of 90. For more than half a century, Buzz was a towering figure in the restaurant industry and a beloved pillar of his community.

The son of Peter and Cleo Harikleia “Hattie” Beler, Buzz learned the ropes of the restaurant industry at a young age working at his parents’ restaurant in Baltimore, Maryland.

Buzz went on to attend the University of Virginia where he was a member of the Riding team and a standout in the classroom. Following graduation, Buzz returned home to pursue a law degree at the University of Maryland.

Buzz did a brief stint in the Army and then spent some time working at a local law firm. Ultimately, though, Buzz found himself yearning to return to the restaurant business. When the Horizon House—a little known eatery in Baltimore—went up for sale in 1965, Buzz and his brother seized the opportunity and opened up the “Prime Rib.”

Their elegant, yet simplistic steakhouse did quite well. A decade later the brothers decided